

Comment

Research in *Veterinary Record*

JANUARY 2011 will see an important step in the development of *Veterinary Record*, as it moves to publishing peer-reviewed research papers online. This will ensure that research findings can be published more quickly than at present, in the form that is most frequently used by researchers internationally.

With the move to the new system, papers will no longer be published in full in the print version of *Veterinary Record*. Instead, a structured one-page summary of the paper in the print journal will highlight the main findings and significance of the work, along with any factors that might affect interpretation of the results. By presenting the information in a concise, standardised format, the aim will be to make the findings more readily accessible to a wider professional readership. Anyone wanting more detail will be able to find this easily by referring to the full paper online.

All research papers submitted for peer-review in *Veterinary Record* after July 1 will, if accepted, be published in this way. After editing, and soon after acceptance, the full version of the paper will be published online in PDF and HTML format. It will be identified by a doi number and will be the definitive publication for citation purposes. With the move to online publishing, publication of research papers in *Veterinary Record* will no longer be bound by print schedules: papers will be posted continuously, with the structured summary being published in the print journal as soon as possible after the definitive online version has appeared.

The summaries that appear in the print journal will contain more information

than is usually the case for research paper abstracts. Each summary will occupy a single page in the print journal and will include the title of the paper, author details and the doi number of the full paper online. The work will be described according to the following format:

- Context (why the question addressed by the paper is important);
- Main conclusion;
- Approach (including an indication of methods);
- Results (including one figure or table as appropriate);
- Interpretation (including any reasons why the results should be interpreted with caution);
- Significance of findings (potential application/impact).

Authors will not be required to provide the summary when submitting their paper but will be asked to do so once their paper has been accepted for publication. Short communications will be published online in the same way as research papers, with the summary in the print journal occupying half a page.

Veterinary Record's notes for contributors are currently being amended to reflect these changes; if authors wanting to submit papers have any question in the meantime, these can be directed to editorial@bva-edit.co.uk

Veterinary Record is not alone in taking this approach to publishing original research. A similar approach has been pioneered and adopted by the *British Medical Journal*, where it has been well received by contributors and readers (Groves and Schroter 2009).

There are a number of reasons for

adopting this format, not the least of which is to provide the best possible service for readers and contributors. Research is as important to *Veterinary Record* as it is to the development of the veterinary profession itself and, with wide distribution of the print journal among veterinary practitioners as well as institutions undertaking research, a key strength of the journal lies in communicating new findings to practising vets. Researchers want their findings to be published as quickly as possible in a form that is readily accessible by their peers which, in practical terms, increasingly means publication online. Practitioners, meanwhile, are more likely to read of new developments in print, particularly if they are in a subject outside their immediate area of interest. As busy clinicians, they also want the information presented in a concise, readable, easily assimilable form. By adopting the new format, we hope to meet the needs of both communities more effectively, while continuing to help bridge the gap between the two.

By appearing as summaries, research papers will occupy fewer pages in the print journal from January next year, but their fundamental importance to *Veterinary Record* will remain unchanged. With the inclusion of more features, scientific opinion and reviews, the space made available will be put to good use, enhancing the value of the journal to readers and contributors alike.

Reference

GROVES, T. & SCHROTER, S. (2009) *BMJ* pico for original research in the print *BMJ*. *BMJ* doi: 10.1136/bmj.b3163

doi: 10.1136/vr.c3255

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Notes

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